



Office of the City Manager/Chief Administrative Officer
Monthly Administrative Report
August, 2015

The month of July was very busy for the Police Department. Officers responded to several serious complaints, some of which notable included a shooting investigation at the Blue Water Townhouses, a serious injury accident in Pine Grove Park involving a 7 year old boy, a stabbing investigation and several active meth lab investigations.

The Police Department also summed up its busiest month of special events in July, culminating with the Blue Water Fest and Boat Night. This year's events were relatively peaceful with few problems and arrests. While crowds seemed comparable to last year and were well behaved and orderly. This year the festival organizers teamed the fireworks up with Family Night which sparked a larger, but calm, crowd for the evening.

Last year, the Police Department wrote a grant for funding of a grassroots program aimed at improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Termed Neighborhood Takeback, the grant was approved and the operation began in July. The grant is directed at serious crimes occurring in our neighborhoods, and is based on hotspot policing. Hotspot policing directs manpower into areas identified by criminal statistics as problematic areas. Future Neighborhood Takeback operations are also being planned for August and September.

Upcoming August events such as National Night Out on August 4th and the Offshore Power Boat races August 7-9 are in the planning stages. The Police Department is again sponsoring the annual Honor Guard Golf Tournament scheduled for August 21st. Proceeds raised go directly to funding the Police Department's Honor Guard.

Call for service in June increased 4% from May 2015 and decreased 9% from June 2014. Increases from May were noted in domestics (+5%) and larcenies (+35%). Numbers are not available for July at the time of this report.

The DPS-Fire Division responded to nine (9) fires since last our last report. The residence at 3410-10th Avenue was a total loss and required immediate demolition after it was destroyed by a fire caused by a candle left burning while the owner was away. A barbeque grill caused damage to 1214 Howard Street when the occupant applied lighter fluid to the burning coals. Two vehicles sustained damage to the engine compartments. One in the 1900 block of 11th Street and the other at Stone & Mansfield Streets. A garage at 1518 Washington Avenue was destroyed and a neighboring home at 1516 Washington Avenue sustained damage due to a fire caused by a grill that was used earlier near the garage. A dryer fire at 3008-24th Street caused damage confined to the dryer. A return call to this address later in the day was for a fire near the front porch caused by careless smoking by the occupant. Fire crews extinguished a small fire on the porch at 520 Superior Street Professional Counseling Center with the investigation continuing. Fire crews were called to Mueller Brass Co. for a fire in a forging press and the air ducts above it. There was no extension into the building but there was damage to a machine of approximately \$2000. It is back in operation as of this writing.

The DPS-Fire division will see the retirement of three command staff members and one firefighter on August 1st and another firefighter on September 1st. As a result of the reduction of five staff, Director Reaves and Fire Operations Chief Mainguy have held a series of meetings with senior command staff to outline operational plans for the safe operation of the Fire Division and the providing of safe effective

service to our residents. However, moving forward with further evaluation of our resources, we continue to operate from all three stations with a daily staffing of ten.

A meeting was held between Chief Reaves, FOC Mainguy and the administration of Tri-Hospital EMS on July 13th to evaluate the reduction in DPS-Fire Response to medical emergency calls matrix that was put in place June 12th. Clarification on policy was discussed from both sides and a decision to continue the program as established with further reviews as necessary was decided. EMS calls responded to so far this month have been reduced 68.6% from calls during the month of July 2014. July 1-27, 2014 (86 EMS calls) July 1-27, 2015 (27 EMS calls). 50 fire inspections of businesses have been completed to date. Fire Marshal Warren conducted inspections of the various food vendor trailers participating in this year's Blue Water Fest for verification of the presence of kitchen hood suppression systems and the proper number and type of fire extinguishers.

As of July 24th, the Code Enforcement Unit had 179 new complaints opened and collected \$4665 in outstanding debt owed this month. We met with Tom Reilly and turned over \$10,600 in debt we were unable to collect through Single Lot Assessments due to the transfer of ownership. We were busy moving into our new offices on the 3rd floor and are enjoy increased communication with the Planning Department as we continue to work together to solve issues. One main concern we collaborated on was the execution of a search warrant to inspect 1429 Bancroft which has had holes in the roof for the last five years.

We reviewed our "List of the Lost" and worked out action plans for a dozen or more houses that failed to fix their code violations. The Administrative Hearings Bureau heard 79 cases this month. The McMorran Auditorium's fix-it ticket date regarding landscaping issues had expired, but was extended due to its possible sale. We also worked with St. Clair County Drain Commission who are now clearing a long standing blighted vacant lot at 28th & Moak Streets. In August, we take the owner and land contract holder of 2530 Conner to Circuit Court in attempt to end the accumulation of junk and debris that the City was forced to clean up twice.

For the Clerk's office this month, we coordinated with our new vendor to launch online our Code of Ordinances in the vendor's format. We also participated in several webinars hosted by General Code to learn about some of the new features their product offers to us internally.

This month we also began working with Jim Brennan to determine if an in-house electronic file management system could be developed. We also saw an increase in the issuance of peddler permits due to an increase in summer time activities. We accepted the Beautification Commission's nominations through the middle of the month for their annual Yard of the Year contest with 75 properties being nominated. Awards will be presented at the Council's August 10th meeting.

DPW staff responded to two serial weather events (in June) which caused the mouth of the Black River Canal to be repeatedly closed by sand. Several requests for revision to the City's dredging permit were processed by the Engineering staff and approved by MDEQ, allowing the City's contractor to clear the canal of these blockages. This work exceeded previous estimates for required annual excavation.

The DPW staff assisted MDOT engineers and mechanics to place the Military Street Bridge into full operation to include automatic opening and closure.

The Engineering staff continues to work on the design and processing of documents for the improvements to South Boulevard from Electric to 31st Street, 20th Street from Dove to Beard Streets, Beers Street from Michigan to Glenwood, 10th Avenue from Garfield to Sanborn Street, Reid from Electric to 16th Street, Glenwood from Pine Grove to Fort Street, and the East Quay parking lot. RFPs for the refurbishment of the elevators and the HVAC system at the MOC are also in process.

The Engineering staff continues to assist the Recreation Department in processing contract bid documents for the improvements at Lakeside Park. Lakeside Park's splash pad shop drawings were reviewed. Bids for construction of the concession stand and demolition of the existing concession stand were opened.

The MOC back deck project has the concrete and landscaping completed, requiring only a concrete sealer. MOC staff continues to get the 4th floor ready for future tenants. Contractor is finishing the punch list on the Nern Street project. The reconstruction of Washington Avenue from 10th Avenue to Stone Street is complete. Stone Street project was milled and the concrete and the underground work is complete. Asphalt work will start in August. The Hickory Area and the Sanborn Street projects are continuing. The east crosswalk at Grand River and Huron was replaced.

The Public Works Department has also been working on repairing various broken crosswalks and sidewalks in the downtown, using allotted DDA funding. Grand River was recently completed. A before and after picture are attached to this email showing the progress. A small chip occurred here when a piece of equipment nicked it on a nearby street surface project. That small section will be cut and repaired soon. We will work throughout the season to make repairs, fixed bricks that are sticking up and make the streetscape safer and appealing for the community. The before picture is courtesy of the Times Herald website.

Bids were awarded for reconstruction of 10th Avenue from Garfield to Sanborn as well as Michigan St, Thomas Edison Parkway and Prospect from Pine Grove to Thomas Edison Parkway.

The streets maintenance crews continue to perform the typical month to month duties. These include repairing pot holes with cold patch at various locations, street sweeping, and crack sealing. Crews did road closures and cleanup activities related to special events. Grass cutting is currently in progress at several locations.

The motor pool continued to perform the typical month to month duties. These include the preventative maintenance list, monthly bridge maintenance and repairing equipment. The preventative maintenance list is falling behind with a mechanic off due to a job related injury.

Traffic control crews fabricated several signs for the Recreation Department and did set ups and traffic control for special events.

Utilities Services continued to perform the typical month to month tasks. These tasks include water meter reading, sewer cleaning, catch basin cleaning and assistance to the Water Office for turn-ons and shutoffs for non-payment of water bills. In addition to these tasks, the crews repaired two sections of sanitary sewer on Huron Avenue and also repaired/replaced a couple of leaking water main valves. The water distribution staff was also busy assisting contractors with shutdowns as a result of new water main installation.

The Water Filtration Plant (WFP) continued to work with the consultant and contractor for the North Elevated Tank Painting Project. The contractor has completed their work and the WFP staff has put the tank back into service. The contractor was awarded the sodium hypochlorite day tank liner project on April 27th, completed the installation and the tank is back into service as well.

The Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Engineering staff met with the contractors for both the primary clarifier's equipment replacement project and the brick repair project. With the lead time for fabrication of the equipment, the contractor will tentatively start in October. The contractor will start the brick repair project in the next week or so and shall only take a few weeks to complete.

During the month of July, the Human Resources Department accepted employment applications for Planning Director, Tree Trimmer and a part-time Health & Safety Training Coordinator. The full-time openings are due to upcoming retirements.

The recruitment process for the Planning Director continues into the month of July. The application deadline for this position closed on July 27, 2015. The applicant pool has been narrowed to three applicants and we expect interviews to take place over the next couple of weeks.

The H.R. Director prepared a Harbormaster Agreement for Mike Davenport. Mike will assume this role for the City while continuing to work for Desmond Marina. He will interact with Dave Smith on any City-related concerns.

We continue to collect the required information from our employees and non-Medicare retirees in an effort to comply with the new mandatory IRS reporting requirements that is a provision under the Affordable Care Act. We continue to work with our I.T. Department in preparation to start transferring data to Health Decisions, Inc.

Health & Safety training classes are ongoing and were held for our new DPW employees.

At the request of HUD Washington Office, the Planning Department staff worked through the holiday week to resubmit the applications for the Sperry Section 108 Loan and BEDI Grant. HUD needs to review current financial material from the developer and take the Section 108 loan to their internal review committee before making further decisions. The new developer(s) have been extremely helpful in providing additional material and in a timely manner. According to our representative in the Washington D.C. Office, we should not expect to hear back from them until mid or late August. After that point, it would still require 60-90 days for all legal documents to be reviewed and executed before a Section 108 loan could be released.

Several other projects are underway during the summer months, including the development of the (proposed) final overlay zoning for a local historic district designation for the RiverPark neighborhood (north and south of Pine Grove Park).

Working with inspectors and public safety officers to establish processes for dealing with meth lab raids on residential units, including determinations of level of hazard in unit, evacuation of tenants as deemed necessary, securing of structure and determining future occupancy requirements. The local health department does not have staff or equipment to test contamination or to provide our staff with support. The State Health Department is overwhelmed and unable to respond in the timely manner necessary. Planning staff, Chief Reaves, and his team have been working on several procedures that will at a minimum provide our staff and the property owner(s) with temporary procedures.

During the first week of July, Joe Anderson and Mike Young and their crew completed the necessary office revisions and moved the Code Enforcement team to the third floor. Everyone, including Lt. Kuehn, have a new office area and staff continues to coordinate tasks and make them feel at home. The office area now holds 19 staff members and is buzzing with activity!

Nine new families purchased a home in Port Huron and 12 families are pending final approvals with staff assistance and the use of the Urban Pioneer Program. Each homeowner completed the required homebuyer workshop and are now busy painting and fixing up their new homes. 86 paint vouchers have been redeemed and at 4 gallons per voucher that means 344 gallons of paint have been given away so far

this summer. 13 façade grants are pending final income verifications and should close the first of August and four additional owner-occupied home owners have completed their renovations this month.

Community Development and Planning Staff worked with the City Rec Department at Woodrow Wilson School and Harrison School each Wednesday for the past six weeks to provide a neighborhood themed craft project. The kids planted flowers, made t-shirts and sidewalk chalk art that highlighted what a neighborhood means to them. They also decorated flower pots, planted flowers in each one and then traveled around the neighborhood leaving a flower pot and card at various homes.

Over 400 flyers were sent to residents of the Harrison Pointe neighborhood regarding National Night Out on August 4th and work continues to secure structures in that neighborhood and make improvements. Staff is working on signage ideas.

Work continues on the Blight Elimination Program regardless of the challenges from Federal and State departments. 18 structures have been acquired in the target areas, 2 have been demolished and 3 are scheduled for demolition within 30 days, 6 are pending demolition bids and 7 are pending environmental testing and inspections. With the current costs and budget it is anticipated that 40-50 structures could be removed as necessary.

The City also stripped woodwork from one site to reuse on another renovation and also coordinated salvage with Habitat.

103 building permits were issued this month with revenue over \$24,000. Staff has had several meetings with reps from McLaren Hospital regarding the expansion project and continue to support their construction efforts and coordinate with the City's engineering staff. It is anticipated that the first stage (Elk Street Parking Lot) will begin next week and the Cancer Center will begin early fall. The Karmanos Cancer Center includes a new 2 story building of approximately 18,000 square feet and will allow for a second phase that includes a new patient tower to be built over the next two years that will also add 160,000 square feet to the site.

Summer is also busy with zoning ordinance complaints, permits for home improvement and maintenance projects and continuing education classes for the inspectors.

237 rental inspections were completed this month with two part time inspectors and the assistance of our full time trade inspectors as their schedule allows. Inspections are booked through the month of August and we are now scheduling into September. Summer is also busy time for "re check" inspections; those violations that were noted in the winter and inspectors gave property owners until summer to correct violations, paint the exterior, replace chimney or tuck-point foundations.

July is National Parks and Recreation month, and as it concludes, the entire department has been working hard on great programs and making our parks better. The staff, along with many volunteers in the community, have been working on one park a week through our Project Parks program. This month Optimist Park, Haynes Park and Gratiot Park were the parks that received a facelift. It is amazing what a little paint and multiple hands can do for a park.

Many parks also received new safety surfaces and many repairs to the playground equipment. The parks crew also installed our new historical Mackinaw and Blueways signs. New grills were installed at Lakeside and Lighthouse parks. Knox will be the next park to have grills installed. The railing at the Lincoln Park turnout was in need of some major repairs because we had concerns that someone could be injured. Our staff did a great job getting this fixed. The State Softball tournament was held in Port Huron and our staff worked hard to get the fields ready for the out of town teams to enjoy.

The forestry crew has also been working hard to catch up tree reports. They cleaned up shrubs and trees at the MOC and at the marina. There were many storm call-outs this month for trees that fell in road ways. The tree crew also had several tree removals for many sidewalk projects in town.

The cemetery had 17 services in July. The new flags were installed at the Veteran memorial and the chapel. The cemetery crew had been doing multiple sweeps to remove items that do not comply with cemetery rules. Overgrown shrubs and bushes have been removed and trimmed. The repair process of all equipment is being reviewed for better efficiency and inventory of parts for quicker response times on repairing equipment. Repairs on the mausoleum is their next project as it is also in need of many repairs. The entire parks, forestry and cemetery staff assisted streets with boat night trash and clean up.

The recreation department has been in full swing. The second session of swimming lessons started this month and the program saw another 150 kids to teach swimming. Both of our swim teams are seeing a great season and has encouraged 120 kids to participate in swim team this summer. Hundreds of children are being fed this summer at our seven locations for the free lunch "Meet up and Eat Up" program. The Neighborhood Time to Play program, which is a cooperation between the Police department and Community Development, has been a great success this summer at Woodrow Wilson and Harrison schools. This program saw over 200 children weekly and included the planting of flowers for neighborhood residents. The children also learned from police demonstrations on bullying, household safety and much more. The Color Run, which is organized by the recreation department and the police department, had over 900 runners. This is a great fundraiser for the C.A.P.T.U.R.E program as well as the at-risk programs that we offer in the schools.

The Information Technology Department worked to assist in the relocation of the Code Enforcement Division to the 3rd floor and preparing the 4th floor for rental to a new tenant. We also began the changes to the payroll programs to accommodate the reporting mandated by the Affordable Care Act.

During July, the Income Tax Division was mainly focused on annual compliance efforts using information received from the State of Michigan. We sent out initial letters to potential non-filers and those taxpayers that may have underreported income. We also sent out second letters to taxpayers with unresolved issues on their 2014 City of Port Huron tax returns.

The Accounting Division continued to perform the typical month to month duties. These include processing payroll, expense checks and other usual monthly work such as posting journal entries, updating various spreadsheets, balancing accounts, etc. We completed and paid the special one percent payroll to employees during July in addition to three regular payrolls. We also updated our list of automatic monthly accounting entries for the new fiscal year. These entries include budget transfers, administrative charges and automatic wage splits for those salaried employees whose wages are charged to more than one fund or activity.

The Assessing Division held the board of review in July. We have also continued the process of verifying all assessing information for 20 % of City properties (representing the first year of a five year process). During July, we have also been reviewing land values throughout the City to verify that the values have been properly updated.

The Treasurer's Office and Water Office continue to be busy with collection of income tax payments and water payments. We also continue to perform the monthly accounting for BWATC. During the month of July, we collected over \$13 million in property taxes. However, it should be noted that approximately two-thirds of that amount is collected for other taxing entities such as the State, County, School District and RESA. We also processed numerous Board of Review adjustments as well as handling the normal water billings and shut-offs for nonpayment during the month.

The City Manager continues to work with the McMorran Authority during their review and due diligence process regarding the SC4 proposal and the Hockey Association proposal. McMorran has contracted out a third party review of the proposals seeking independent review on both the operational impact of each proposal and the community impact of each proposal.

We expect McMorran to present to the City Council a recommendation by the end of September. Then the process for public input can begin. We also believe many presentations should be made to community groups such as Blue Meets Green, the Chamber and MainStreet as well as Rotary. However, this process cannot begin until the Council has been fully presented with the facts and proposals.

Our goal is to ensure proper fact finding is completed so that the Mayor and Council have all the facts and details before being asked to make a decision. We have informed the college that the City will not be pressured to rush a decision of such significance. They seem very understanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James R. Freed', written over a horizontal line.

James R. Freed
City Manager
Chief Administrative Officer